

## Toolbox Additions

Until now, the information you've read in this handbook has been straightforward. It's kind of a cookie-cutter approach to getting ready for college. That's mostly because all teens need a strong foundation of core courses to do well in life. But sometimes there are snags or challenges that require more information and more effort.

You might have trouble with your study habits. You might have a child to care for, learning or physical disability, or even a special athletic talent. These challenges and concerns deserve attention, too. Students facing some of these issues will find a lot of good information here.

In this section, you'll also find worksheets and activities to help you think through different college and career planning steps.

Remember, the older you get, the more responsibility you have for the direction your life takes. If you want to accomplish something, plan for it. If you need help, get it. Teachers, school officials, parents, guardians, and friends are available to help you reach your goals. But some things will be up to you.

## 10 Study Tips

- ▶ Know your learning style. Take a learning style quiz from a career specialist or counselor. This will help you plan study strategies.
- ▶ Decide what to study, how long to study, or how much to study before you get started. Set a goal and stick to your deadlines.
- ▶ If you're a motivated student, complete difficult tasks first. For procrastinators, start off with the easy, interesting parts of the project. Reward yourself as you accomplish tasks.
- ▶ Have special places to study. Take into consideration lighting, temperature, and the location of a desk, pen, paper, etc.
- ▶ Study 30-50 minutes then take a 10-minute break. Stretch, relax, and have a snack. If you get tired or bored, move to a different location, subject, or task.
- ▶ Allow plenty of time for reading, outlining, and writing papers. Use less time for memorization, review, and self-testing.
- ▶ Use memory activities to review just before you fall asleep.
- ▶ Study with a friend. Quiz each other, compare notes, and predict test questions.
- ▶ Read all assignment and test instructions carefully.
- ▶ Speak up! If you need help, ask for it.



## Solutions To Common Studying Problems

**T**he best way to make sure you get good grades is to start the year practicing good study habits and stick with them all year long. It's a lot easier to maintain good grades than to improve poor grades later.

Some of the most common studying challenges are listed on the next page along with tips to overcome them. Maybe some of these tips will help you get more from your schoolwork.

### 1. Balancing school and friends...

This can be a challenge. Friendships are important, but so is school. The best way to balance school and friends is to study together. That way, you can visit, play, and accomplish your school goals, too. Good friends will support you with your academic and future goals. As a last resort, you can make friends with kids who are as interested in schoolwork as you are, or spend less time with unsupportive friends.

### 2. Add interest to your reading assignments...

To get through a long reading assignment, imagine yourself in the story. Get involved. Ask yourself, "What is important to remember about this section?" Take notes or underline key sections and discuss the material with others in your class. You could also create a study group to break the assignment into sections. Each person could be responsible for closely studying one part of the text. The other parts you could skim or outline. Then, get together as a group to share what you learned and study for tests.

### 3. Cramming before a test...

Cramming before a test is a bad idea. Start studying well in advance, and keep studying as you go along in the school year. Begin with an hour or two a day, and then increase your study time as exams approach.

### 4. Don't know where to start...

Your challenge is to prioritize. With a big project, list all the things you have to do. Then, split the project into small, manageable chunks. Ask, "Which part is due first? Which part of the assignment is worth more points? Which task will take the most time to complete?" Decide which tasks are most important and what order you'll use to get things done. Then, get started! The most important thing to remember is start early and do a little bit each day. You'll be amazed at how much progress you make.

### 5. Staying up all night to study...

Before a test, it is important to have a rested mind. You should relax and unwind, mentally and physically, before each test. Eat well, sleep well, and maybe get some exercise. These help you stay relaxed and do better on the test.

### 6. Not enough time to study...

The trick to solving this problem is getting organized. Bring out all of your notes and textbooks. Identify the most important information and the things you don't understand. Focus your study time and energy on learning those things. If you need extra help, ask a teacher or tutor. If after school activities are the problem, keep a calendar with game days, meetings, assignments, and practices listed. Start assignments right when you get them and use lunch hours and breaks to make extra progress.

### 7. Trouble remembering things...

If you only have trouble sometimes, try connecting new information with your own examples and experiences. Use rhymes, poems, or mental pictures to help remember important facts. Some people even make up songs to help them remember. If you always have trouble remembering, no matter how long or hard you study, talk to your school counselor. Your counselor can talk with you about your specific problems and recommend strategies to help.